**RAFT: Role/Audience/Format/Topic**

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**What is it?**

The RAFT strategy (Santa,1988) employs writing-to-learn activities to enhance understanding of informational text. Instead of writing a traditional essay explaining a concept learner, students demonstrate their understanding in a nontraditional format. This technique encourages creative thinking and motivates students to reflect in unusual ways about concepts they have read. RAFT is an acronym that stands for :

   · **Role of the writer**: What is the writer's role: reporter, observer, eyewitness, object, number,etc.?

   · **Audience**: Who will be reading the writing: the teacher, other students, a parent, editor, people in the community, etc.?

   · **Format**: What is the best way to present this writing: in a letter, an article, a report, a poem, an advertisement, e-mail, etc.?

   · **Topic**: Who or what is the subject of this writing: a famous scientist, a prehistoric cave dweller, a character from literature, a chemical element or physical object, etc.?

The RAFT strategy forces students to process information, rather than merely write out answers to questions. Students are more motivated to undertake the writing assignment because it addresses various learning styles.

**How could it be used in instruction?**  
This writing-to-learn strategy engages students in explaining what they know about a topic and elaborating on the topic in a fun way.

**How to use it:**

1. Think about the concepts or process that you want students to learn as they read a selected passage. Consider how writing in a fun way may enhance students' understanding of the topic.   
2. Brainstorm possible roles students could assume in their writing.   
3. Decide who the audience would be as well as the format for writing.  
4. After students have finished reading, identify the role, audience, format and topic (RAFT) for the writing. Assign the same role for all students, or let them choose from several different roles.

**Examples of RAFT Assignments**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Audience** | **Format** | **Topic** |
| Newspaper Reporter | Readers in the 1870's | Obituary | Qualities of General Custer |
| Lawyer | U.S. Supreme Court | Appeal Speech | Dred Scott Decision |
| Abraham Lincoln | Dear Abby | Advice Column | Problems with his generals |
| Mike Royko | Public | News Column | Capital punishment |
| Frontier Woman | Self | Diary | Hardships of the West |
| Constituent | U.S. Senator | Letter | Gun control |
| News Writer | Public | News Release | Ozone layer has been formed |
| Chemist | Chemical company | Instructions | Combinations to avoid |
| Wheat Thin | Other Wheat Thins | Travel Guide | Journey through the digestive system |
| Plant | Sun | Thank-you note | Sun's role in plant's growth |
| Scientist | Charles Darwin | Letter | Refute a point in evolution theory |
| Square Root | Whole Number | Love letter | Explain relationship |
| Repeating Decimal | Set of Rational Numbers | Petition | Prove you belong to this set |
| Cook | Other cooks | Recipe | Alcoholism |
| Julia Child | TV audience | Script | Wonders of eggs |
| Advertiser | TV audience | Public Service | Importance of fruit |
| Lungs | Cigarettes | Complaint | Effects of smoking |
| Huck Finn | Jim | Letter | What I learned during the trip |
| Joseph Stalin | George Orwell | Letter | Reactions to *Animal Farm* |
| Comma | 9th grade students | Complaint | How it is misused |
| Trout | Self | Diary | Effects of acid rain on lake |

**RAFT Examples for Math**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Audience** | **Format** | **Topic** |
| Zero | Whole numbers | Campaign speech | Importance of the number 0 |
| Scale factor | Architect | Directions for a blueprint | Scale drawings |
| Percent | Student | Tip sheet | Mental ways to calculate percents |
| Repeating decimal | Customers | Petition | Proof/check for set membership |
| Prime number | Rational numbers | Instructions | Rules for divisibility |
| Parts of a graph | TV audience | Script | How to read a graph |
| Exponent | Jury | Instructions to the jury | Laws of exponents |
| One | Whole numbers | Advice column | Perfect, abundant, deficient, amicable numbers |
| Variable | Equations | Letter | Role of variables |
| Container | Self | Diary | Comparing volume measurements |
| Acute triangle | Obtuse triangle | Letter | Explain differences of triangles |
| Function | Relations | Article | Argue the importance of functions |

**RAFT Examples for Science**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Audience** | **Format** | **Topic** |
| Water drop | Other water drops | Travel guide | Journey through water cycle |
| Bean | Self | Diary | Process of germination |
| Frog | Tadpole | Letter | Life cycle |
| Electron | Fourth grade students | Letter | Journey through a parallel circuit |
| Limestone rock | Cave visitors | Postcard | Chemical weathering process |
| Statue | Dear Abby readers | Advice column | Effect of acid rain |
| Trout | Farmers | Letter | Effects of fertilizer runoff |
| Duck | U.S. Senator | Letter | Effects of oil spill |
| Star | Self | Diary | Life cycle |
| Peregrine falcon | Public | News column | Effects of DDT |
| Red blood cell | Lungs | Thank-you note | Journey through circulatory system |
| Liver | Alcohol | Complaint | Effects of drinking |
| Lungs | Brain | Thank-you note | Quitting smoking |
| Rusty old car | Previous owner | Letter | Chemical change |

**RAFT Examples for Social Studies**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Audience** | **Format** | **Topic** |
| Sacajawea | Jean Baptiste | Letter | Our travels with Lewis and Clark |
| Newspaper Reporter | Readers in 1851 | News report | Native Americans sign treaty at Ft. Laramie |
| Dead Confederate Soldier | Robert E. Lee | Complaint | Pickett's Charge |
| Bird | Wright Brothers | Complaint | New invention disrupts skies |
| 21st Century Woman | Susan B. Anthony | Thank-you note | Women's Rights |
| Alexander the Great | Aristotle | Letter | What I have seen on my journeys |
| Ben Franklin | Dear Abby | Advice column | My son likes the British |
| Kaiser Wilhelm II | European Heads of State | Recipe | How we can start a World War |
| Kit Carson | Future tourists | Travel guide | Beautiful places in the West |
| Mohandas Gandhi | Martin Luther King Jr. | Letter | Nonviolent opposition/resistence |
| Great Wall of China | Self | Diary | Invaders I have seen and stopped |
| Colorado River | Rafters | Travel guide | What you will see if you travel my length |
| Rain Forest | Humans | Complaint | Deforestation |
| Constituent | Governor | Letter | State taxes |
| 21st Century American | James Madison | Thank-you note | The Constitution |